Fundamentals of Net Control Station (NCS)
and Net Operations

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Identification

- Remember to state your FCC call sign at least every 10 minutes.

Getting the attention of Net Control

- Call sign suffix is an efficient way to get net control's attention (*e.g*., "BEE").
- Tactical call sign should be used to get attention when tactical calls have been established
- It is redundant and longer to say "net control this is BEE" because all traffic in a directed net is handled by net control unless otherwise directed by net control

Relaying

- Relays are important for a simplex net over a wide area with terrain and other obstructions
- To alert NCS when they have not acknowledged a contact, state "relay" and your suffix (*e.g*., "Relay BEE")
- NCS acknowledges with "BEE go." Using the call sign of the selected operator is more specific and avoids conflicting traffic, as there might be multiple relay offers. "Relay go" is more ambiguous and might result in more than one station transmitting at once to provide the relay.

Fills (i.e., repeating sections of messages)

Either NCS or an operator can request a fill (repeat of a portion of a transmission that was not understood). An operator may be asked to stand by while emergency traffic passes before a fill is completed. Don't feel shy about requesting information you need, but only ask for information that you are uncertain of. Do not ask for the repeat of an entire message/ transmission unless there was zero copy. Be precise about directing repetition of only the portion that was not understood.

- Sample query: "Does anyone need a fill from the bulletin station?"
    - I need a fill between "emergency" and "fire."
- Acknowledge the fill with "copy" or "roger"
- Write it down before you voice your message, if possible. Transmitting messages from written text (even if it is just a quickly composed general announcement) helps execute fills, because the originating station can refer back to their written message and precisely respond to the fill without having to try and remember the exact words that they previously said.

Moving Traffic

Unless it is a general announcement intended for the whole net, message traffic for a particular recipient should be moved to another frequency, leaving the net available to handle coordination of other communications. Before changing frequencies, the two operators should ensure that they can communicate with each other.

Longer example:
EC8: **EC8**
NCS: **EC8 go**
EC8: **I have a priority message for Ken6**
NCS: **Ken6 contact EC8 here, and move to 147.420**
Ken6: **EC8 this is Ken6**
EC8: **copy Ken6**
Ken6: **EC8 move to 147.420**
EC8: **copy 147.420 moving**
Ken6: **moving**
. . . (transmissions on different freq.) . . .
EC8: **EC8 back**
NCS: **acknowledge EC8**
Ken6: **Ken6 back**
NCS: **acknowledge Ken6**

Shorter example:
EC8: **EC8 with priority message for Ken6**
NCS: **Ken6 contact EC8 here, and move to 147.420**
Ken6: **EC8 this is Ken6, move to 147.420**
EC8: **copy Ken6, moving to 147.420**
Ken6: **moving**
. . . (transmissions on different freq.) . . .
EC8: **EC8 back**
Ken6: **Ken6 back**
NCS: **acknowledge EC8 and Ken6 back**

Be Succinct (but not too succinct)

It is always good practice to not be unnecessarily wordy with transmissions. On a simplex net you can not hear others when you are transmitting, so you want to drop the transmission once you have conveyed the necessary information so others can respond. In the case of an emergency with an extended period of operation on air, a very efficient net control operator may evolve a very succinct mode of operation. If there are new operators cycling into the net who are unfamiliar with the protocol, it may be necessary to be a bit more detailed with directions until they understand the procedure.

Arriving at and Using a New Frequency

- Upon tuning to a new frequency, ask whether it's in use. If in use, the operators should return to NCS and request another frequency.

- Upon moving to another frequency, use your FCC call sign at the beginning and the end of the transmission (and every 10 minutes if there that long)
- Give the other operator at least a minute to respond on the new frequency. If there is no contact on the new frequency, return to net control and advise of the failure to pass the message.

On the new frequency, the receiving station goes first as a convention, but be proactive in initiating the contact; don't wait.

Example:
- Is this frequency in use?
- KEN3, this is KEN1, KM6UCF. Do you copy? (Note the use of the FCC call sign following the tactical call sign.)
- KEN 1, this is KEN 3, NI6A. Good copy.
- Ready to copy?
- Affirmative.
- [Message sent in KE 213 format.]
- [No need to repeat message; only ask for clarification/fills as needed.]
- “roger” or “copy”
- Returning to net control: “KEN1 back, KM6UCF”
- “KEN 3 back, NI6A”

Upon returning to the net, announce yourself by stating your call sign or suffix (*e.g.*, BEE.), or tactical call (add your FCC call if it has been more than 10 minutes since you used it on the net freq. when you return). Message success on the other frequency is assumed unless you state otherwise.
- “KEN1 back”
- “KEN3 back”
- If message was not passed: "KEN3 fail" or "KEN3 no copy"
- NCS: “Acknowledging KEN3 and KEN 1”

Announcing Emergency Traffic

We prefer to use “emergency” followed by the call sign or suffix to get the attention of NCS. The problem with using “break break” is that NCS might only hear one "break" (if partial cover from other traffic, etc.) and not give precedence to the message. Also, if there are multiple stations calling “break” or “break break” simultaneously it is ambiguous and difficult for NCS to efficiently direct a single operator with the highest priority to return. If NCS hears any part of the word “emergency,” they will give immediate priority to the station ID voicing emergency. Remember that emergency traffic designation should be reserved for immediate life safety issues. Net control should pause any (non-emergency) traffic handling in process when an emergency call is made.

Example:

- "Emergency UCF."
- NCS: "UCF go"
- UCF then lists her traffic as to destination and precedence.

It is essential to leave gaps during communication to allow other traffic to break in. All operators should drop the key and pause on a regular basis to efficiently interact with other traffic.

Handling Doubles

Doubles occur when two or more operators transmit simultaneously. NCS will attempt to decipher some identifying factors from one of the operators, such as a partial call sign or familiar voice, and ask that operator to transmit again.

Examples:

- "Amador, go ahead."
- "Bravo Uniform try again."

After the first traffic is handled, NCS will ask the other operator to come back and list their traffic.

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Edited, May, 2021